

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0717
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
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AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KUWAIT 2284

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, US, XA, ZP, IR
SUBJ: KUWAITI CONCERN OVER POTENTIAL COMMUNIST THREAT IN IRAN,
ARABIAN PENINSULA AND AFRICA

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1. SUMMARY: DURING MY APRIL 13 MEETING WITH FONMIN UNDERSECRETARY
WR-RASHID, HE EMBARKED ON A LENGTHY DISCOURSE ABOUT THE SPREAD
OF COMMUNIST INFLUENCE AND CONSPIRACY IN THE MIDDLE EASTERN
REGION AND AFRICA. RASHID DESCRIBED THE U.S. ROLE IN COUNTERING
THIS AS INEFFECTIVE AND CALLED FOR MORE DIRECT AMERICAN SUPPORT
FOR THOSE COUNTRIES MENACED BY SOVIET ENVELOPMENT. RASHID'S
PRESENTATION WAS OBVIOUSLY INSPIRED BY RECENT VISIT OF SOVIET

FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL WHOSE AGGRESSIVE ATTITUDE WITH RESPECT TO SOVIET OBJECTIVES IN THE HORN OF AFRICA AND INDICATION OF GROWING INTEREST IN THE GULF AREA WAS NOT REASSURING. RASHID'S EXPRESSION OF HEIGHTEN KUWAITI ANXIETY OVER THESE SOVIET ACTIVITIES REPRESENTS A SOMEWHAT BROADER CONCEPTION OF USSR OBJECTIVES IN MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA THAN HERETOFORE. THIS REACTION MAY FURNISH AN OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP CLOSER AND DEEPER CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN THE U.S. AND KUWAIT AND THE OTHER GULF STATES IN ORDER TO PROMOTE BETTER MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING AND APPRECIATION OF STRATEGIC REALITIES, WHICH MIGHT LEAD TO A MORE SYMPATHETIC UNDERSTANDING IN THIS REGION OF U.S. POLICIES AND CONCERNS. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING A MEETING APRIL 13 WITH FONMIN UNDERSECRETARY RASHID AL-RASHID (ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED AS BRIEFING FOR NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE GROUP WHOSE FLIGHT ARRIVED TOO LATE), I WAS TREATED TO LENGTHY DISCOURSE ABOUT SPREAD OF COMMUNIST INFLUENCE AND CONSPIRACY IN IRAN THROUGH ARABIAN PENINSULA INTO HORN OF AFRICA AND DOWN INTO SOUTHERN AFRICA. ALTHOUGH RASHID AND THE FOREIGN MINISTER HAD EXPOUNDED BEFORE ON THE POTENTIAL COMMUNIST THREAT TO MIDDLE EASTERN REGION THEY USUALLY DID SO IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT AND THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE SOVIET UNION TO PROFIT FROM ISRAELI OBDURACY AND LACK OF U.S. SUPPORT FOR PALESTINIAN CAUSE. THIS TIME RASHID VIEWED THE COMMUNIST THREAT IN MORE STRATEGIC TERMS AND EXPRESSED SERIOUS CONCERN THAT ITS SPREAD COULD ENDANGER MODERATE

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REGIMES IN IRAN AND ARABIAN PENINSULA AS WELL AS UNDERMINE REGIMES IN SUDAN AND SOMALIA. PRESENCE OF STRONG SOVIET AND CUBAN FORCES IN ETHIOPIA AND ANGOLA GAVE COMMUNISTS CAPABILITY TO MOVE INTO MOZAMBIQUE AND NAMIBIA AND THREATEN PEACE THERE.

3. RASHID WAS PARTICULARLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE SPATE OF RECENT DISTURBANCES IN IRANIAN CITIES WHICH HE SAID WERE STIMULATED BY COMMUNIST (TUDEH) ELEMENTS. HE DEPRECATED ROLE OF ULTRA-CONSERVATIVE RELIGIOUS ELEMENTS IN THESE DEMONSTRATIONS, SAYING THAT THESE COULD EVENTUALLY BE CONTROLLED WITHIN AN ISLAMIC FRAMEWORK. THE DANGER CAME RATHER FROM LEFTISTS AND STUDENTS INSPIRED BY THE COMMUNISTS.

4. IN THE ARABIAN PENINSULA, SOUTH YEMEN REPRESENTED AN IMPORTANT SOVIET FOOTHOLD AND POSED A THREAT TO OMAN AND NORTH YEMEN, AS WELL AS POTENTIALLY TO SAUDI ARABIA AND OTHER STATES IN THE AREA. RASHID REFERRED TO THE JUST-CONCLUDED VISIT OF YEMEN ARAB REPUBLIC PRIME MINISTER ABD AL-GHANI, AND SAID THAT KUWAIT AND SAUDI ARABIA WOULD CONTINUE TO PROVIDE IMPORTANT SUPPORT TO YAR IN ORDER TO COUNTER RESIDUAL SOVIET INFLUENCE THERE. ALSO, VISIT OF PDYR FOREIGN MINISTRY WAS EXPECTED SHORTLY AND GOK EXPECTED TO PROPOSE TO HIM MEETING

WHICH OMANI FOREIGN MINISTER IN KUWAIT TO REVIEW THEIR BILATERAL PROBLEMS AND ATTEMPT TO RELIEVE TENSIONS BETWEEN THEM. RASHID EXPLAINED THAT KUWAIT CONTINUES TO TRY TO MAINTAIN CONTACTS WITH SOUTH YEMENIS BY EFFORTS TO ASSIST IN THE EDUCATION, SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS FIELDS.

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5. RASHID SPOKE OF PERVASIVE COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN SUDAN WHICH MANIFESTED ITSELF RECENTLY IN SHORT BUT PARALYZING STRIKE OF SUDANESE TECHNICIANS (WE HAVE SEEN NO REPORT ON THIS). HE POINTED ALSO TO SHAKY STATE OF SOMALIA REGIME AND SERIOUSLY DETERIORATING SITUATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA IN CONNECTION WITH RHODESIAN AND NAMIBIAN PROBLEMS.

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6. THESE STRATEGIC CONCERNS APPEARED TO HAVE BEEN STIMULATED BY RECENT DISCUSSION RASHID HELD WITH VISITING SOVIET OFFICIAL VICTOR TORSHIKAN (PHONETIC), WHO WAS DESCRIBED AS COUNSELOR IN THE SOVIET MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. RASHID WAS CLEARLY STRUCK BY AGGRESSIVE ATTITUDE DISPLAYED BY SOVIET VISITOR DURING DISCUSSION OF THESE PROBLEMS, PARTICULARLY WITH RESPECT TO HORN OF AFRICA, WHERE SOVIET VISITOR INSISTED THAT USSR WOULD SUPPORT MENGISTU REGIME IN ETHIOPIA AGAINST ERITREANS, AS WELL AS SOMALIS, AND ANY OTHER PRESSURES FROM OUTSIDE. TORSHIKAN'S EXPRESSION OF KEEN INTEREST IN EXPANDING SOVIET RELATIONS WITH STATES IN THE GULF WAS NOT REASSURING TO RASHID.

7. RASHID COMMENTED THAT THE U.S. ROLE IN THE FACE OF THIS DEVELOPING SITUATION APPEARED TO BE INEFFECTIVE AND HESITANT. HE FELT THAT THE U.S. SHOULD TAKE FIRMER ACTION TO SUPPORT THOSE STATES, SUCH AS SOMALIA, WHICH COME UNDER THE SOVIET AND CUBAN MENACE. HE ALSO EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE U.S. WOULD SUPPORT THE SHAH IN RESISTING ANY THREATS TO HIS MODERATE REGIME WHOSE INCREASING TOLERANCE HAD PERMITTED THESE VIOLENT EXPRESSIONS OF OPPOSITION.

8. BECAUSE OF PRIOR COMMITMENTS ON BOTH OUR PARTS, I DID NOT HAVE TIME TO RESPOND TO RASHID'S PRESENTATION IN ANY DETAIL. I DID, HOWEVER, EXPRESS MY INTEREST IN THE PRESENTATION OF HIS VIEWS WHICH DEMONSTRATED AWARENESS OF THE COMMUNIST DANGERS, AND INDICATED THAT IT SUGGESTED THE NEED FOR CLOSER AND DEEPER CONSULTATION BETWEEN OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS. WHILE OUR RELATIONS WERE CORDIAL AND FRIENDLY, I BELIEVED IT WOULD BE TO BOTH OUR ADVANTAGES TO PROBE THESE MATTERS IN GREATER DEPTH AND DETAIL SO THAT THERE COULD BE A BROADER MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING OF THESE DEVELOPMENTS AND OUR APPROACHES IN DEALING WITH THEM.

9. COMMENT: WHILE SIMILAR EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN BY OTHER
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LEADERS IN THE GULF HAVE BEEN REPORTED BY OUR EMBASSIES (MOST RECENTLY IN TEHRAN'S 3218), KUWAIT'S PREVIOUS ATTITUDE TOWARD THE EXTENSION OF SOVIET INFLUENCE TENDED TO BE SOMEWHAT BLASE AND NONCHALANT. THIS REACTION BY RASHID TO HIS SOVIET VISITOR REPRESENTS A SOMEWHAT ENHANCED KEENNESS IN KUWAITI APPRECIATION OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS. AS KUWAIT'S ROLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST REGION, AND ALSO OUTSIDE OF IT, EXPANDS BECAUSE OF ITS LARGESSE, KUWAITI CONCERN ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS OUTSIDE ITS

BORDER AND THEIR EFFECT ON KUWAIT'S FUTURE STABILITY SEEMS
TO BE GROWING RAPIDLY. I BELIEVE THERE MAY BE AN OPPORTUNITY
FOR US TO EXPLOIT THIS CONCERN BY OFFERING TO ENGAGE IN DEEPER
AND MORE RESPONSIVE CONSULTATION WITH THE KUWAITIS--AND WITH
OTHER GULF STATES AS WELL--WHICH MIGHT LEAD TO A MORE
SYMPATHETIC UNDERSTANDING IN THIS REGION OF U.S. POLICIES
AND CONCERNS. I INTEND TO EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITIES FOR DOING
SO DURING MY CONSULTATIONS IN WASHINGTON NEXT MONTH.
MAESTRONE

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